12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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brush. Boys of about twelve and more, who live in the men's house, have very loose ties with their households. Only a house-by-house census could accurately determine where each of these boys belongs, for they are bound only by ties of affection to the houses of their mothers.

Central to the relative independence of the boys as compared to the girls is the fact that male labor is not oriented about any household economy, and the boys take little part in adult male labor until they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen. A few years after this time, most marry and shift their household affiliation. Unlike the girl, the boy is not reared within the social unit in which he will take permanent membership, and strong ties and obligations to the extended family are not enforced upon him. And since the extended family has its core in a group of related and coöperating females, it is not expected that a boy will help in their work.

The nature of male work combines with the social structural factors to make the boys' life so carefree. Young boys cannot take part in the hunt nor can they cut trees for garden clearings. They are expected to help clear underbrush during the latter operation, but the performance of such duties occurs only during a limited period at the end of the rains. Otherwise, they prepare for their future roles as hunters and fishermen through play. They gather wild fruits for their own consumption and shoot little birds from blinds in the underbrush. Or a band of boys may spend a day wandering along the banks of a stream to shoot smaller species of fish with the bow and arrow. When the boy reaches about fourteen years of age, he has grown sufficiently in strength and skill to participate occasionally in a hunting or fishing trip, and within two or three years he joins the men in most of their activities. He is then old enough to marry and, if there is no girl in his own village,

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883 whom he desires, he goes off to other villages in search of
[884] a mate. He will find the new men's houses in which he will stay to be organized along the same lines as the one in which he had been incorporated. And just as his strongest ties during adolescent years were to his age mates and the
[882] occupants of the men's house, so also will he find his primary association to be with the men of the village, as a whole.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

592 Patrilineal descent and matrilocal residence without vil-
621 lage endogamy give the Mundurucú an unusual social structure. This is also manifest in the realm of political organization. The oldest man of each household is nominally considered to be its leader, but I never saw the "leader" intervene in the over-all direction of women's activities, except to inform them when a consignment of farinha was promised to a trader. The actual direction of household activities is generally in the hands of its oldest woman, commonly the wife of the leader. The female director of the household exerts considerable influence over the other women because of her age and her senior status under ideally matrilocal conditions as older sister, mother, and grandmother to them. Her husband is respected by the members of the household, and by the rest of the people of the village, but he is peripheral to its main activities.

554 House leaders, as all older men, usually occupy high
621 positions on the village prestige scale. Shamans are ac-
[752] corded considerable standing, and any man who is serious in demeanor and possesses a large store of traditional knowledge is well regarded. The highest position in the
622 village, however, is that of the chief. Considerable con-
554 fusion surrounds the contemporary status of chieftainship because of historical changes in methods of selection and